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ABSTRACT

The National Household Education Survey (NHES) is a data collection system of the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) that is designed to address a wide range of education-related issues through telephone surveys. It provides descriptive data on the educational activities of the U.S. population and offers a variety of educational statistics. This brochure describes the studies the NHES has conducted since it began in 1991. NHES:1991 addressed early childhood education and adult education, screening about 60,000 households and interviewing about 14,000 parents. NHES:93 focused on school readiness with interviews with about 11,000 parents and school safety and discipline through interviews with about 12,700 parents. The topical components for NHES:95 were the same as those of 1991, with more than 45,000 households screened. In 1996, the NHES will concentrate on parent and family involvement in education and adult and youth civic involvement. A new design feature for 1996 will be the collection of demographic and educational information on members of all households rather than just those households potentially eligible for a topical component. It is expected that 59,000 or more households will be screened in future NHES studies. (SLD)

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National Household Education Survey

An Overview

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educational experiences for the total targeted population and for domains defined by race and ethnicity. Estimates by race and ethnicity are of great interest, especially for monitoring educational trends over time. Therefore, the NHES sample design oversamples minorities in order to increase the reliability of estimates for these groups.

A new design feature of the NHES program, being implemented in the NHES:96, is the collection of demographic and educational information on members of all households, rather than just those households potentially eligible for a topical component. In addition, this expanded screening feature includes a brief set of questions on an issue of interest to education program administrators or policymakers. The total household sample size is sufficient to produce state estimates for the brief topical questions; it is expected that 59,000 or more households will be screened in all future NHES collections.

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NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD EDUCATION SURVEY

The National Household Education Survey (NHES) is a data collection system of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) that is designed to address a wide range of education-related issues. It provides descriptive data on the educational activities of the U.S. population and offers policymakers, researchers, and educators a variety of statistics on the condition of education in the U.S.

The NHES has been conducted in the springs of 1991, 1993, 1995, and 1996. The survey will be conducted periodically thereafter. The NHES collects data on high priority topics on a rotating basis. Although the primary purpose of the NHES is to conduct repeated measurements of the same phenomena at different points in time, one-time surveys on topics of interest to the Department of Education may also be fielded.

NHES: 91

The topics addressed by the NHES:91 were early childhood education and adult education. About 60,000 households were screened for the NHES:91. In the Early Childhood Education component, about 14,000 parents/guardians of 3- to 8-year-olds completed interviews about their children's participation in non-parental care/education, characteristics of programs and care arrangements, and early school experiences including delayed kindergarten entry and retention in grade. In addition, parents were asked about activities children engaged in with parents and other family members inside and outside the home. Information on family, household, and child characteristics was also collected.

In the NHES:91 Adult Education component, about 9,800 persons 16 years of age and older, identified as having participated in an adult education activity in the previous 12 months, were questioned about their activities. The information collected on programs and up to four courses included the subject matter, duration, sponsorship, purpose, and cost. A smaller sample of nonparticipants (about 2,800) also completed interviews about barriers to participation. Information on the household and the adult's background and current employment was also collected.

NHES: 93

In the NHES:93, nearly 64,000 households were screened. Approximately 11,000 parents of 3-to 7-year-olds completed interviews for the School Readiness component. Topics included in this component were the developmental characteristics of preschoolers, school adjustment and teacher feedback to parents for kindergartners and primary students, center-based program participation, early school experiences, home activities with family members, and health status. Extensive family and child background characteristics, including parent language and education, income, receipt of public assistance, and household composition, were collected to permit the identification of at-risk children.

In the School Safety and Discipline component, interviews were conducted with about 12,700 parents of children in grades 3 through 12 and about 6,500 youth in grades 6 through 12. Topics included the school learning environment, discipline policy, safety at school, victimization, the availability and use of alcohol/drugs, and alcohol/drug education. Peer norms for behavior in school and substance use were also included in this topical component. Parents provided extensive family, household, and school characteristic information.

NHES: 95

The topical components for the NHES:95 were the same as those for the NHES:91: Early Childhood Program Participation and Adult Education. Both components underwent substantial redesign to incorporate new issues and develop new measurement approaches. Over 45,000 households were screened for the NHES:95.

In the Early Childhood Program Participation component, parents of about 14,000 children from birth through 3rd grade were asked about their children's participation in care or education provided by relatives, home-based nonrelatives, Head Start programs, and center-based programs. Additional sections collected information on early school experiences for school-age children, home literacy activities, health and disability status, and parent and family characteristics.

In the Adult Education component, about 19,700 adults were asked about their participation in basic skills courses, English as a second language (ESL) courses, credential (degree or diploma) programs, apprenticeships, work-related courses, and personal development/interest courses. Adults participating in programs or courses provided information about those programs or courses, including the subject matter, duration, cost, location and sponsorship, and employer support. Nonparticipants in selected types of adult education were asked about their interest in educational activities and barriers to participation. Extensive background, employment, and household information was collected for each adult.

NHES: 96

In the NHES:96, the topical components are Parent/Family Involvement in Education and Adult and Youth Civic Involvement. In addition, the expanded screening feature described below includes a set of questions on public library use for all households.

NHES DESIGN

The NHES is a telephone survey of the noninstitutionalized civilian population of the U.S. Households are selected for the survey using random digit dialing (RDD) methods. Data are collected using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) procedures.

Because of high costs associated with screening large numbers of households in order to meet the sample size requirements of the NHES, more than one topical component is addressed concurrently whenever possible. In deciding which components and issues should be administered in the same collection, consideration is given to the probability of households being eligible for one or more of the survey components. The ideal combination of survey components is one that maximizes the probability of a household qualifying for the survey, but limits the number of households that must respond to more than a single topical component.

One of the goals of the NHES is to produce reliable estimates of the characteristics of children's and adults'

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